



Panorama

The Newsletter of the Landscape Rehabilitation Project
of the Philadelphia Museum of Art

THE PENNSYLVANIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Issue 1
Winter 1997

Construction Begins !

After years of planning, coordinating, designing, meetings and paperwork, the dirt is flying at last. JRT, Inc., started the work of transforming the landscape of the Philadelphia Museum of Art in November. The winning Phase I bid was \$1.1 million.

This first phase, encompassing the East Terrace and the Kelly Drive Entrance, begins the reconstruction of the 24-acre landscape surrounding the building. Over the next decade, all of the Museum's grounds will be restored.

Phase I is funded by the City's capital budget and all the work is being overseen by Fairmount Park. Tom Kline, chief engineer for the Park said, "It's great to see these improvements underway. We've just finished restoring the Art Museum steps, and now we'll continue with enhancements of the Art Museum entrances."

The East Terrace, and Art Museum Drive will receive new infrastructure, new paving, and new plantings. On the East Terrace, overgrown shrubs and other declining plants have been removed to make way for the new plantings to come. The empress trees, *Paulownia tomentosa*, (see insert) will be planted in spring, and the rest of the new plantings will be installed in fall 1997.



Trenching for plumbing and electrical lines in the Museum's East Terrace.

One question that had to be resolved before Art Museum Drive could be replaced is how to redirect traffic entering from Kelly Drive. Fairmount Park engineers worked with Museum staff and the Streets Department to find a route that would least inconvenience visitors. In the early stages, a temporary signal will be installed at the service road located a few yards north of the current entrance. Traffic will enter and exit there and then shift onto the new portion when it is ready.

After the new segment of Art Museum Drive is completed, the service road will be removed, and become part of the lawn surrounding the north side of the Museum. By fall 1997, visitors will arrive through new entrances, by car or on foot. For a complete description of the finished Phase I project, please turn to page two. ■

Nancy Q. O'Donnell

The Landscape Rehabilitation Project of the Philadelphia Museum of Art is a joint project of The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, The Fairmount Park Commission and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The Landscape Plan

PROJECT START-UP

Recognizing that the once-splendid landscape surrounding the building had become worn out during the last 65 years, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) initiated the Landscape Rehabilitation project in 1991, in cooperation with the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Fairmount Park Commission.

PLANNING PROCESS

A project of such a scale requires extensive planning. Committees were formed, workshops held, and after presentations from several design firms, the Steering Committee hired Wallace Roberts and Todd to study the current landscape, design a new landscape plan that respects the history of the site, and devise a phased plan for improvements.

FIRST PHASE

Phase I focuses on the two most prominent approaches to the Museum: the East Terrace and Art Museum Drive. Both locations will receive infrastructure improvements, new paving and new planting, totalling \$1,187,000, most of which has been allocated from the capital budget of the Fairmount Park Commission. The Streets Department has contributed \$150,000 towards the renovation of the



New landscape to be installed along Art Museum Drive.

Kelly Drive entrance.

East Terrace

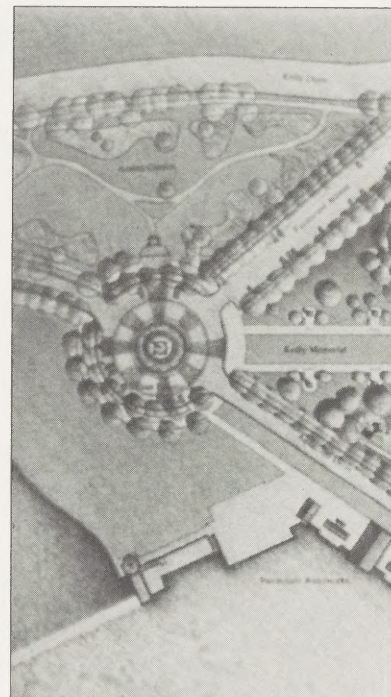
A rich palette of shrubs and perennials will enhance the East Terrace, making it a beautiful place to linger and enjoy the view down the Parkway to City Hall. The planting will include intertwining hedges of dark green holly, roses, and rich, red smokebush. Part of this linear hedge will enclose a border of flowers and plants chosen for foliage effect such as acanthus, lady's mantle, and ornamental grasses.

Below-ground improvements include electrical wiring and water pipes. New granite curbing will surround the planting. Lighting fixtures and stone benches will be added as funding becomes available. The outdoor cafe will return as part of the summer scene on the East Terrace during the upcoming Rodin and Michelangelo exhibit through the end of June.

Art Museum Drive

The Drive will be realigned to join Kelly Drive at right angles, an important safety improvement. A planted median will separate the entrance and exit lanes. A semicircular plaza will be added below the limestone wall that supports the Upper Terraces. The entire approach to the West Entrance will be repaved, and new sidewalks and granite curbs will be installed up to the service entrance.

The rugged rock ledges along Art Museum Drive will be planted with azaleas and rhododendrons to continue the theme of the



Panorama extra

Focus on the East Terrace Trees

The Empress Tree

Ever since the City Beautiful movement swept Philadelphia in the 1920s, Empress trees, *Paulownia tomentosa*, have been an important part of the city's landscape. Empress trees surround the fountains at Logan Circle, and fill the niches that flank the East Terrace steps at the Art Museum.

Tradition has it that the trees came to the U.S. in the early part of the century as packing used to cushion china imported



Some of the Empress trees have serious wounds. This one has a large cavity and decaying bark at the base.

photos Nancy Q. O'Donnell

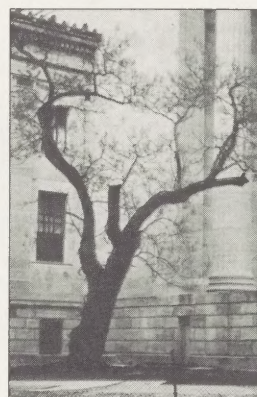


from East Asia. The large seeds served as the styrofoam peanuts of the day. Supposedly, viable seeds sent plants sprouting up in unexpected places, particularly along the rail lines that carried cargo. This story may be true; paulownias do grow easily, but the trees also entered the country through the usual route, from plant collectors to nurseries and arboreta to parks and gardens.

Empress trees became popular with designers when they saw the impressive purple flowers and large leaves. Eight were planted in the East Terrace of the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the 1920s. Now

that they are well into their seventh decade, they are declining. Most have lost major limbs, several have serious defects in their trunks, and all have lost the dignified bearing characteristic of the mature tree. In short, it's time for retirement.

All eight trees will be carefully taken down by Fairmount Park crews in the next month or so. Soon after, adolescent replacements will be planted by JRT planting crews. The new trees are 15 to 18 feet tall now and will grow quickly to fill the space. Since they grow so rapidly, within five years the trees will be about 35 feet tall. Visitors will have the pleasure of seeing these picturesque trees rise over a beautiful flower border. ■



Left: Necessary pruning to remove damaged branches has left many of the trees with an unattractive silhouette.

Far Left: One of the replacement trees. The new trees are between 15 and 18 feet tall.

Search for Replacements

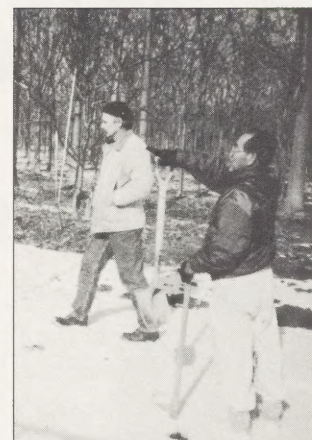
Panorama extra

Empress trees are Asian imports that grow very happily in our climate. When young, they can grow as much as 12 feet in one year. Because of this quick, easy growth, there is no demand for them, so ornamental nurseries don't carry them. The only commercial source available sells small whips to foresters who grow them for their lumber.

How then to find well-grown sizable replacements for the Art Museum? The first place the project team looked was within Fairmount Park itself. Park arborists had harvested Empress trees from the wilder sections of Fairmount Park in the past to replace dead trees at Logan Circle. A search revealed that the trees

could be found, but the logistics of removal and transportation would be formidable.

As the search continued, project team member Kathryn Newland of PHS, and Walt Stankus of Fairmount Park were driving home from a



photos Nancy Q. O'Donnell



Gus Jardel and Charles Dougherty of Fairmount Park meet with Choong Sik Lee to select trees for the East Terrace. Top: Mr. Lee points out a candidate to Gus Jardel. Center: Gus Jardel tags a good specimen as Charlie Dougherty looks on. Left: Mr. Lee of Dong-San Foresters.



holiday visit in Baltimore when they spied an entire forest of Empress trees near the highway. They took the next exit and drove around until they found the plantation. After Choong Sik Lee, the proprietor, was told about the quest, he graciously agreed to donate suitable trees to the project. We thank him for his valuable contribution. ■

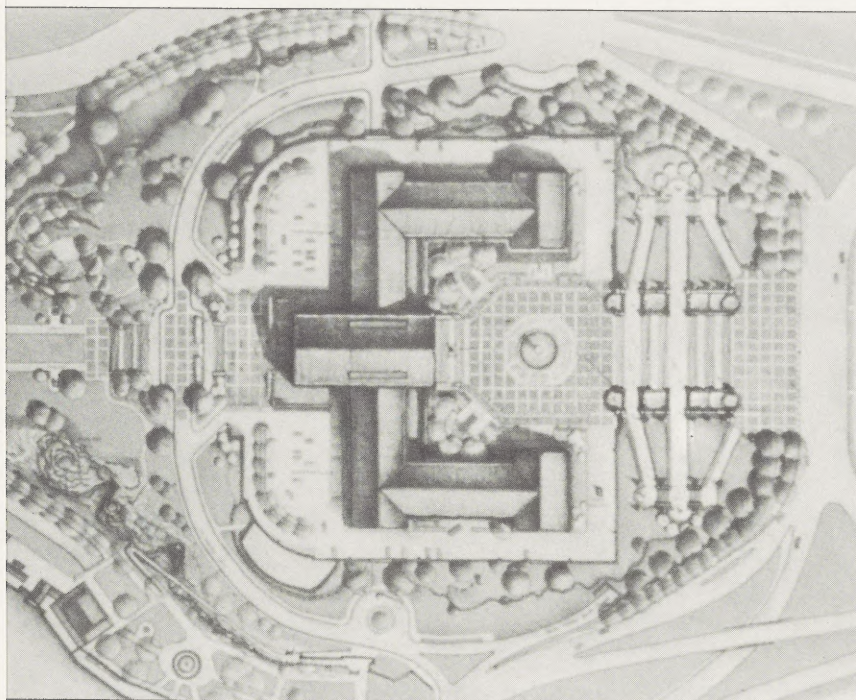
The picturesque outline of the Empress Tree is readily identifiable in the winter landscape by the upright, conical seed heads that are prominent against the sky. Each pecan-shaped seed pod carries up to two thousand winged seeds. As the pods dry, they open, and seeds are released to look for a likely spot to germinate. Paulownias can

be found in all kinds of places since they grow even in very poor soil. It's not unusual to find them in vacant lots and other neglected areas.

Flower buds are covered in a pale tan fuzzy covering called tomentum; this gives the tree the second part of its Latin name, *Paulownia tomentosa* (the first refers to the

granddaughter of Catherine the Great of Russia, Czarina Anna Pavlova). Because the buds appear in late fall, they are vulnerable to winter storms and will not survive very cold winters.

The buds turn into very large, foxglove-shaped blooms; each limb is ablaze with vanilla-scented lavender blossoms in mid-May.



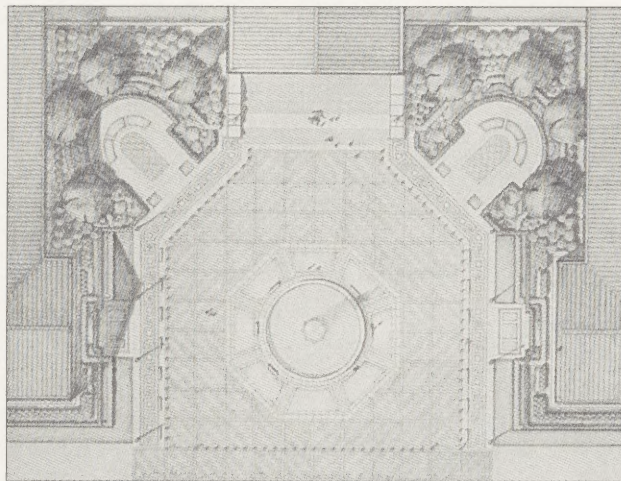
all images Wallace Roberts & Todd

*Landscape
Rehabilitation
plan of the entire
Art Museum
grounds.*

Azalea Garden further north. Daffodils, groundcovers and small flowering trees complete the design. The stately weeping beeches and ginkgo trees that surround the service entrance and the sculpture niche are being protected during construction, so they can continue to provide pleasure to the next generation of Museum-goers.

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Phase II of the project will focus on the Ramparts that flank the Art Museum's East steps and Eakins Plaza, at the base of the steps. The Plaza, an important staging area for events on the Parkway, needs to be repaved. The ramparts will be replanted with suitable species to reinforce the scale and importance of this approach to the Museum. Plans are still in the design stage. Construction drawings will not be done until the funds are allocated in the City budget for these improvements.



The East Terrace will be awash in bloom.

Since no landscape can thrive unless it is cared for, the Museum, PHS, and Fairmount Park plan to establish a \$2,000,000 endowment to help pay for maintenance. There are also other opportunities to contribute to this project. To make a contribution call Alexa Aldridge, Vice President for Development at the Museum at 215.684.7751. For more information about the landscape project call PHS at 215.988.8800.■

PROJECT DONORS

Staffing for the project's management by PHS is funded through the Pew Charitable Trusts. Proceeds from the Philadelphia Flower Show were used for the comprehensive landscape rehabilitation study, while the William Penn Foundation funded three supplementary studies to support this project. We are most grateful to the following city agencies, corporations, and individuals that have made generous contributions.

City of Philadelphia, Streets
Department
Fairmount Park Commission
Philadelphia Magazine
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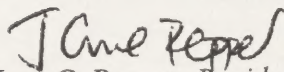
Philadelphia
Museum of Art

THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS

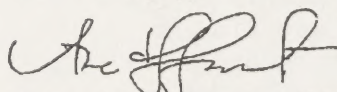
Help for this project has come from many sources and we are grateful to members of the Art Museum Landscape Restoration Committee listed at right for their participation in the planning and design phases.



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Fairmount Park Commission



Jane G. Pepper, *President*
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society



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THE PENNSYLVANIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Issue 2
Spring 1998

Let's Celebrate We've Completed Phase I

As with most wonderful landscapes, the restoration of the grounds around the **Philadelphia Museum of Art** has been many years in the planning. This spring, when I walked around and looked at the new plantings coming into leaf and flower, I replayed in my mind all the efforts that had gone into the completion of Phase I. All those planning meetings, all the discussions and designs, all the hard work of our volunteers, staff members and contractors, has finally come to fruition. To all our partners, the Fairmount Park Commission, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Streets Department, and the City Planning Commission, and to our funders (see list on page 3), thank you for your dedicated support and encouragement.

Together we have given that handsome building, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the beginnings of a beautiful, graceful and functional landscape. To date, we've spent \$1.4 million; now we must go forward to raise the maintenance endowment and the capital funds to restore the rest of the grounds.

Jane Pepper

Jane G. Pepper
President, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society



In late winter, we planted shrubs, perennials and eight young empress trees (*Paulownia tomentosa*) in the Museum's East Courtyard.

Photos by Ira Beckoff

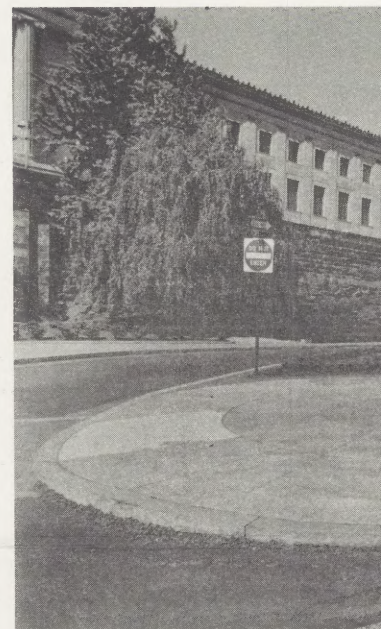
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What's Next for the Art Museum Grounds

A JOB WELL DONE - PHASE I SUMMARY

The East Courtyard: We've enhanced the East Courtyard with a rich palette of shrubs and perennials, dark green holly, roses, red smokebush, acanthus, lady's mantle, ornamental grasses and eight healthy, new empress trees (*Paulownia tomentosa*), all bordered by new granite curbs. The colorful, formal design makes the courtyard a lovely place to linger and enjoy the view down Benjamin Franklin Parkway to City Hall (see photo on front page). Light fixtures and benches will be added as funding becomes available. Below ground at the East Courtyard, we improved electrical wiring and water pipes.

Art Museum Drive: We've realigned Art Museum Drive to join Kelly Drive at right angles; this allows cars coming down the drive to see oncoming traffic from all directions. We've also added a median to the drive, planted with saltspray rose, (*Rosa rugosa* 'Frau Dagmar Hartopp') to separate the entrance and exit lanes. Next to the bottom of the drive, we've added a semicircular Plaza, also planted with saltspray rose. The new Plaza, complete with benches, provides a place to sit and helps support the limestone wall surrounding the Museum. We've planted the rock ledges along Art Museum Drive with azaleas, rhododendrons, low evergreens and vinca in keeping with the adjacent Azalea Garden's theme; additional shade trees will be added. Flowering redbuds and a white fringe tree add color and height to the design. The already existing stately, weeping beeches and ginkgo trees now thrive in a rich community of plants.

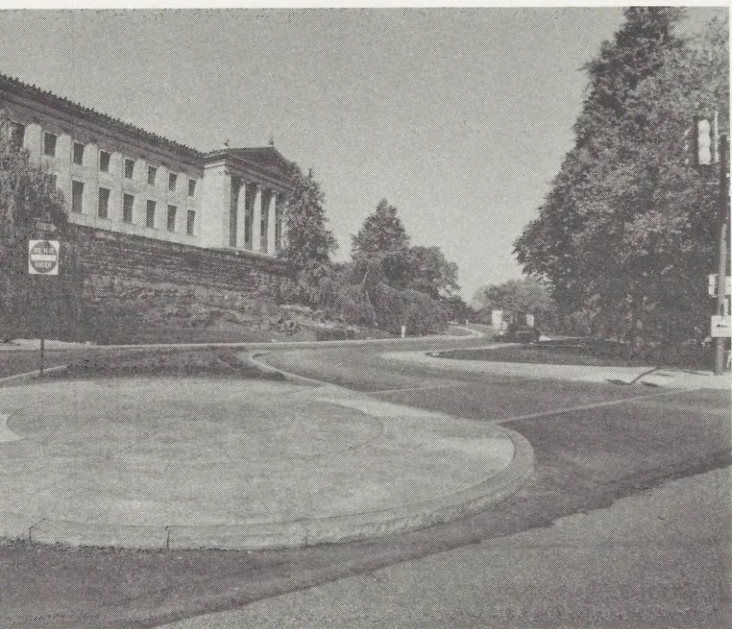


We will repave the Plaza at the base of the East Entrance steps in the first part of Phase II.

WE LAUNCH PHASE II

Now that the Phase I courtyard and entrance plantings have been completed, we will repave the Eakin's Oval Plaza at the base of the East Entrance steps, facing the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The Plaza has endured many years of wear and tear and must be replaced. Plans are now close to completion; \$750,000 have been allocated in the City's capital budget for these improvements to be installed in 1999.

In 2000, we'll replant the landscaped areas bordering the East Entrance steps and fountains. Along the walkways, we'll remove overgrown shrubbery and plant new holly hedges. Where once magnificent weeping cherry trees have declined, we'll plant new cherry trees. On the sloping panels between the walkways, we'll add a lush lawn. And large, columnar evergreen trees will ascend the hill next to the restored fountains.



We've realigned Art Museum Drive to join Kelly Drive at right angles to improve traffic visibility, and we've planted the rock ledges with azaleas, rhododendrons and trees.

DIG IN: HELP MAINTAIN THE ART MUSEUM GROUNDS

Here's a chance to indulge your love of beauty with the satisfaction of digging in at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

We're starting the **Philadelphia Museum of Art Gardeners**, a group

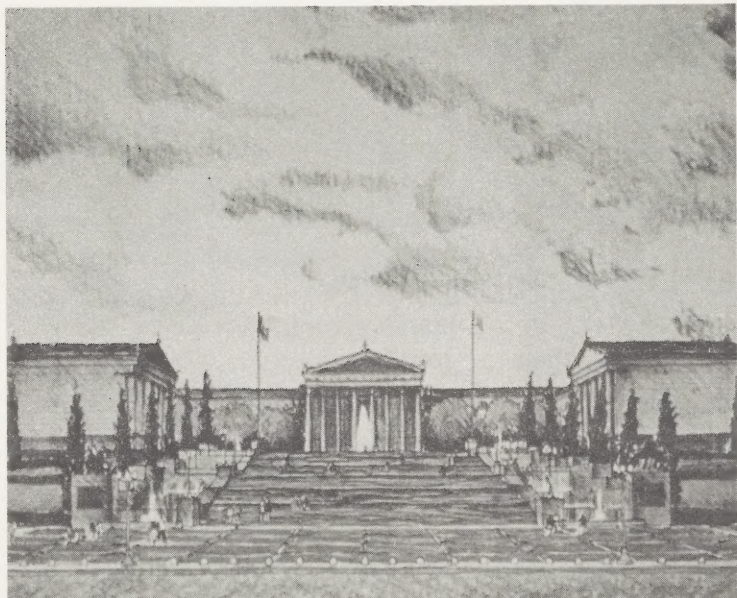
that will help to keep the beautiful new landscape plantings in the East Courtyard and Kelly Drive Entrance horticulturally healthy and looking tip-top.

The installing landscape contractor is responsible for maintaining the plants until June 1999. In the meantime, we want to assemble a volunteer team to take over when the contractor's responsibility ends.

If you are interested in volunteering, please call **Joan Kapczynski**, (215) 988-8865.

Partners Seek \$3.4 Million Maintenance Endowment

Weeding, watering, mowing and mulching are crucial to maintain attractive and healthy landscapes. While some of these services can be done by volunteers, others are best performed by skilled contractors. That's why the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Fairmount Park Commission are raising funds to ensure that the Museum's improved grounds are well cared for through the next millenium.



Rendering for the Year 2000

We'll add new holly hedges, cherry trees, a lush lawn and columnar evergreen trees to the areas bordering the East Entrance steps and fountains.

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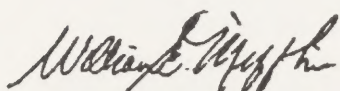
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PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

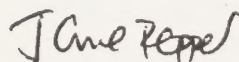
The landscape rehabilitation of the entire Museum grounds will take many more years to complete. The rehabilitation plan has identified 10 additional areas to be developed; each one has a different and appropriate design. The landscape architects' design fees have come to PHS through individual donors and Flower Show revenues; installation depends on availability of funds in the City's capital budget. Maintaining the improved grounds is also an integral part of the rehabilitation project.

THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS

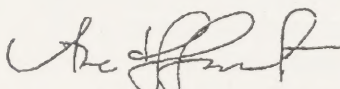
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THE PENNSYLVANIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Summer 2001

Reviving the Ramparts A Warm Welcome for Visitors

With the completion of the "Ramparts" plantings that flank the Philadelphia Museum of Art's east steps, visitors experience a diverse and engaging landscape as they approach the museum from the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The clutter of unkempt and overgrown shrubs, muddy eroded slopes, and misshapen trees is now just a faded memory.

The amenities include new wiring and lighting along the steps, with elegant cast-iron period fixtures replacing the worn fiberglass models. New paving has replaced crumbling walkways where necessary, and a full irrigation system with 11 different zones will guard against any future drought-filled summers.

The new planting—created in the spirit of the original Jacques Greber plan of 1919—presents an ordered and subdued foreground to the imposing building. Columnar evergreens flank the main and side stairs, and the ramps are bordered by a low Japanese holly hedge. The interior "panels" have been graded smooth and filled with a verdant lawn, and flowering cherry trees accent the summit of the side stairs and the ends of the central crosswalk.

Beyond the central plantings, a rich palette of summer flowering shrubs takes over at the northern and southern edges, dominating the crests of the rock outcroppings. Summersweet 'Hummingbird' and 'Ruby Spice' provide sweet scents in warm weather. *Itea virginica* 'Henry's Garnet', viburnums 'Erie' and 'Mohawk', and 'Miss Kim' lilacs bring long-lasting flowers. The landscape also features four kinds of hydrangeas:

'Annabelle', 'Snow Flake', 'Snow Queen', and 'Blue Billow'. Better still, most of these are PHS Gold Medal Award plants.

All of these improvements were funded through the City of Philadelphia's capital budget and overseen by both its Capital Programs office and the Fairmount Park Commission. PHS funded the design work and worked with the Commission to oversee construction. The general contractor, Seravalli, and the landscape contractor, Bustleton Services, both made a special effort to complete the job in time for the Republican National Convention last summer. "We've received wonderful feedback," says PHS executive vice president J. Blaine Bonham, Jr. "The response from visitors and city residents has been overwhelmingly positive." ■



Eroded slopes and tired shrubbery detracted from the natural grandeur of the museum's site.

Manicured turf and vertical evergreens make a fitting foreground for the museum.



Keeping it Green

Managing the Landscape

Since the restoration of the Museum's East Courtyard and the entrance off Kelly Drive, PHS has turned its attention to the upkeep of this newborn landscape—a critical element in ensuring that the new plants continue to thrive. PHS collaborates with the Fairmount Park Commission and the Art Museum to both review the maintenance program and supervise the landscape contractors, who provide horticultural expertise and turf care.

The East Courtyard in June.



The contractors' major tasks include pruning over 300 linear feet of 'Frau Dagmar Hartopf' roses and providing seasonal care for hundreds of perennials from *Anemone* to *Perovskia*, along with periodic dividing and transplanting. The tall order of responsibilities also includes lush ornamental grasses that must be cut back in early spring, and shrubs in need of pruning.

This landscape faces all of the challenges typical to urban open spaces, like weather damage and littering. Some visitors use the landscape for purposes other than those intended, such as thrill-seeking bike riders who catapult from the rock outcroppings to the ground below. Tented activities are frequently staged in the Museum's East Forecourt, and major events like the Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Fourth of July fireworks show attract large crowds. These all contribute to the inevitable "wear and tear" of the Museum landscape.

Yet, with careful management and funds from the endowment, the restored grounds will continue to flourish over the coming years. ■

Up in Smoke

A Closeup of *Cotinus coggygia*

Though it would be charming to encounter smoke tree (*Cotinus coggygia*) in its native habitats of southern Europe, central China, and the Himalayas, one need only travel as far as the Philadelphia Museum of Art to see this intriguing woody plant up close.

Cotinus coggygia features dramatic, reddish-purple leaves, offering a sharp contrast to the Museum's

warm-toned walls. Since it was planted, the *Cotinus* has been coppiced (essentially a hard pruning technique that encourages lush, upright growth) in early spring to fully develop its rich foliage. This pruning method sacrifices the delicate clusters of flowers (the "smoke" in smoke trees) to get the desired foliage.

However, an experiment is underway. "We've been permitting the smoke trees in the back of the niches to grow upwards of 12 feet," says PHS Public Landscapes project manager Nancy O'Donnell. "Now we're pruning every other year,

Thanks to our Supporters



As every homeowner knows, the beauty of a garden depends as much on its continued upkeep as it does on the original design and installation. The plantings at the Art Museum are larger than most home landscapes, but the same principles regarding maintenance apply. From the start, we have been determined to ensure quality care of this evolving new landscape for many years to come.

Thanks to the generosity of many friends, we are delighted to announce that the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Philadelphia Museum of Art have raised an endowment of almost \$2 million to ensure sufficient funds to cover contractor costs for mowing, trash clean-up, new plantings, mulching, and general care.

Donors to the Art Museum Landscape Maintenance Fund are listed on the right and following page. To you all, I say many thanks on behalf of PHS for your generosity in helping us build an endowment fund. I would like to say special thanks to Dodo Hamilton, who provided an early challenge gift, and to Laurada, Russell, and Alison Byers, who generously suggested that contributions in memory of Russell G. Byers, Jr. be placed in this fund.

As many of you will remember, Russ, a columnist for the *Philadelphia Daily News*, died tragically in November 1999. Russ was an enthusiastic promoter of PHS's Philadelphia Green program and would call me periodically to get an update on progress with the Museum's grounds. Grateful thanks to the more than 230 people who donated over \$36,000 in honor of Russ.

Jane Pepper

Jane G. Pepper
President, The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Donors to the Maintenance Fund

Anonymous
The Arcadia Foundation
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Right:

Volunteers Ginger Nicholson and Natalie Auerbach team up to plant crocus.

Below:

Ann Reed and other Museum Green volunteers coppice the smokebush.



Museum Green Garden Day

On a sunny Saturday morning last November, a troop of 25 "Museum Green" volunteers gathered at the Museum's East Courtyard. Mostly from the surrounding neighborhood, this dedicated group meets twice a year under the guidance of PHS staff to help tend the Museum's grounds. Grateful thanks go out to former PHS Council chair Ann Reed, who leads Museum Green.

While part of the group focused on moving and dividing perennials on the courtyard, the others moved down to the grassy slope along Art Museum drive to plant white snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis* 'Viridapicis' and *Galanthus ikariae*), and purple crocus (*Crocus tommasinianus*) in the lawn. In total, an astounding 3,200 bulbs were planted in only two hours.

Museum Green can always use extra hands—their next gardening day is November 3, 2001. If you would like to join this enthusiastic crowd, please contact PHS's Joan Kapczynski at 215-988-8865; email: jkapczyn@pennhort.org ■

so it can flower in the off years. It will add another dimension to this inviting landscape." *Cotinus coggygia* has been in cultivation since the 17th century, and was also a favorite of Victorian gardeners. Taken in this historical context, it seems only appropriate that it now thrives at the Museum—a sanctuary for the artistic excellence of centuries past. ■

Smokebush (along the wall) in early summer. By September, the plants will reach 10 feet.



The Remaking of the Plaza

What is the most popular spot for large city celebrations? Eakin's Oval Plaza, of course, which is situated at the base of the Museum's east steps. It is a focal point for the Fourth of July fireworks celebration, annual Bike race, the Thanksgiving parade, and many other temporary uses. And in 1999, with funding from the Fairmount Park Commission and the assistance of the City's Capital Programs office, the plaza was enhanced with new paving.



The paving pattern complements that of the East Forecourt at the top of the Museum's steps. Concrete pavers resembling bluestone were laid in large panels and surrounded by granite banding. In its earlier incarnation, the plaza's surface was damaged from the repeated impact of heavy equipment, so below ground, it was redesigned to withstand the wear and tear of large-scale events. Also, street lighting was relocated to clear sight lines, and underground electrical lines and connections were upgraded for the telecasting of events. These combined improvements have transformed the plaza into a grand entrance to the Museum's grounds. ■

Granite bands catch the light on the newly made plaza.

Panorama

Written by: PHS staffers Kathryn Newland, Nancy O'Donnell, Gretchen Trefny, John Gannon

Art direction: Anne Vallery, Judy Haraburda



Chair: Anne Kellett

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